

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Habitat for Humanity of Iowa, Inc.

**Application ID:** 13AC145039

**Program Name:** Habitat for Humanity of Iowa AmeriCorps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

- (+) The applicant clearly identifies three needs they seek to address, the need for affordable housing vs. wages earned, the need to educate people in target area vs. benefits of homeownership, and the need to increase the number of affordable units available.
- (+) The applicant adequately explained why the targeted population was chosen by citing the 2010 U.S. Census, and the fact that 49% of the housing stock was built in 1950 and 27% of the population is not in owner-occupied units; therefore, homeownership opportunities are severely limited for all families.
- (+) The applicant provides an excellent description of housing service activities including 0% mortgage homeownership, homes build, and renovation assessments.
- (+) In general, the applicant provides sufficient evidence of the value added services of AmeriCorps members using an internal study contrasting results by staff size and composition. The work cycle of housing and seasons in Iowa support a suitable use of AmeriCorps members.
- (+) Habitat for Humanity of Iowa identifies specific job responsibilities for its AmeriCorps members and the types of interactions its AmeriCorps members will have with volunteers to solve community needs.
- (+) Habitat for Humanity of Iowa indicates that areas served by its AmeriCorps members witnessed a 20% increase in production of affordable homes over areas without AmeriCorps members during prior program years.
- (+) The applicant clearly and specifically describes how many Members are needed and the types of slots, what each of the proposed slots will do including examples of tasks, and provides an effective comparison of the impact on productivity levels for affiliates with AmeriCorps members vs. those without Members. The request appears to be justifiable and the information validates the significant impact AmeriCorps members have on this program.
- (+) In narratives, the applicant provides sufficient evidence-based and evidence-informed research underscoring

project design with respect to housing direct services.

(+) The 2011 Habitat Homeowner Impact Pilot Study provides solid empirical evidence of the program efficacy on leading economic, education, and mental health indicators.

(+) Habitat for Humanity of Iowa plans to provide 225 affordable homes for 675 individuals. These target figures were derived from actual results achieved in prior program years and appear to be a reasonable target figure.

(+) Habitat for Humanity cites evidence from prior program years showing the program positively impacted community health and safety, education, well-being, and dependence on government assistance.

(+) The interventions Members will be engaged in are evidence-based as demonstrated by their strong past historical statistics and recorded data. The applicant cited that they had met and exceeded their target of completing 50 homes per year for each year of their current grant.

(+) In addition to creating affordable housing for an estimated 675 people, the applicant does an effective job of illustrating the positive ripple effects that home ownership makes on a person's health, sense of safety and community pride, scholastic performance, and desire for independence /personal responsibility. The applicant cited the source of that data, according to the 2011 Habitat Homeowner Impact Pilot Study. Sufficient information is provided to indicate that this approach is evidence-based.

(-) Very little has been mentioned about disaster response throughout the application. Self-sufficiency was briefly mentioned but again there does not seem to be a plan in place to educate people about the benefits of homeownership, especially considering the applicant acknowledged that low-income families seem oblivious to this option.

(-) Habitat for Humanity of Iowa poorly documents the magnitude of the need. It states Iowa will gain 45,000 low-income jobs over the next decade, which will generate a need for an additional 94,000 low-income homes. While these figures document a need for additional low-income housing, the two figures are not consistent.

(-) In the disaster services focus area, such as the response phase, the applicant omits adequate disclosure on state population, subject to 100 year flood plans in the flood of 2008. Reasonable estimates of resource constraints at the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service Disaster Cadre warranting the additional help. Disclosures of five FTEs in Hurricane Sandy reflect interstate agreements for resource sharing in the event of a high category disaster incident rather than identify or demonstrate need.

(-)The applicant didn't provide compelling evidence for the needs of response operations after a disaster incident which weakens the justification. The insufficient level of detail in the narrative brings attention to planning efforts by all stakeholders.

(-) The applicant does not clearly tie the activities of the AmeriCorps members and volunteers into meeting all of the needs they identified earlier, specifically educating the low-income families regarding the benefit of homeownership vs. renting.

(-) Habitat for Humanity of Iowa does not explain how its AmeriCorps members will address the value of homeownership to the community.

(-) The applicant did not provide sufficient information about methodology or researchers to strengthen causation.